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ROSE-LEAVES

HENRY CLAYTON · PUBLISHER
LEE · SHEPARD · NEW YORK

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Rose Leaves

Poems

BY

Henry Clayton Hopkins

Drawings

BY

Lee Woodward Zeigler

PUBLISHED BY
JNO. H. WILLIAMS COMPANY
BALTIMORE

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To Lydia

By the Sea.

DAWN, red on the blue sea-line,
Bursts open like a rose,
Scattering its petals on the tide
Which way the sea-wind blows.
Ho! for a ship with a snowy sail!

The pink flakes drift to the shore
And vanish in the spray;
But lo! on the echoing cliff,
A miracle greets the day.
Speed, speed a ship with a snowy sail!

In the mystery of the grass,
A thousand roses nod
Where a maiden patiently waits
Love at the hand of God.
Woe to a heart and a snowy sail!

Day dies like a rose in blight,
Sere-yellow and pale red,
And a heart lies pulseless and cold
Under the twilight dead.
God, and a heart, and a snowy sail.

A Toast.

I WOULD not drink to eyes less bright than thine,
To lips less smiling, or a heart less true—
When Cupid brims the witching bowl with wine,
For more than empty praise thy glances sue.

Nor would I drink to any thought less sweet
Than thy dear hand placed softly in mine own,
That told me what thy lips would fain repeat,
But that vain speech, disarmed, had silent grown.

Long Live the King.

THE king hath need of my sword to-day—
Not least of his armament—
To stem the tide of the fierce affray
Of friend and of foeman blent;
And thou, my queen,
I proudly ween,
Would'st never that I should stay—
For ever the king before the queen,
Though queen of love she be.
Long live the king!
God save the king—
And give us victory!

Love's battle won—oh, I care for naught!
Though brother-in-arms be Death;
For the foeman's grace shall ne'er be sought
With a conquered craven's breath;
And thou, my queen,
I proudly ween,
Will glory that I have fought—
For ever the king before the queen,
Though queen of love she be.
Long live the king!
God save the king—
And give us victory!

Indifference.

AMID the silken vesture of her hair,
My love she sits nor speaks nor makes a sign,
But picks the tender petals from the rose
That once was worshiped in a golden shrine.
The crimson leaves fall fluttering to earth—
My love she sits and sings a song of mirth.

—From *Overland Monthly.*

Lilies.

IF from my spirit's eager flow
You plucked the stainless thoughts that grow
For your delight,
As you pluck from the mottled stream
The lilies white—
And o'er their perfect petals dream
Till faded quite—
Each thought of mine to you would seem
A flower bright.

And if you treasured in your breast—
As on your heart the lilies rest—
My love for you,
'Twould be as fair as some brave flower
Perchance that grew
In barren field or rifled bower
Where flowers were few—
And life would grow from hour to hour
More strong and true.

In Passing.

I CAUGHT a blossom from the sod,
A dainty bud of palest blue;
It taught a gracious thing of God,
But something else it taught me, dear—
A something sweeter, far more near—
To think a loving thought of you.

Mirage.

YESTERDAY sitting with you at dusk.
The sweetest thing came to pass. I think
'Twas either the leaping fire in the grate
Or the tea I forgot to drink—
Balming the air with its langorous scent,
A mingling of roses and musk—

That wrought a vision of your dear face,
Bending dreamily over mine.
And you were my wife for that little while
By a tender, endearing sign;
For, bending closer, you kissed me thrice
On the brow with womanly grace.

But there! 'twas all in a dream, you know.
And you are listening wearily—so!

Cupid's Birthday.

WHEN Summer first, with cheek of flame,
Renewed from earth her olden fame,
A tiny fay crept into life,
Cradled in a flow'ret fair—
A dainty being scarce of earth,
A nestling of the air.

It almost seemed when first we peered
In at the stranger, heaven-reared,
Some ruder wind than they that croon
O'er the rose-land of our day
Might sear the tender little elf,
And waft our hopes away.

But midst the ardors of the clime,
A dauntless boy he grew in time;
And laughed to see the whirlwinds blow,
Scattering blossoms o'er the land—
And he and I and she I love
Walk ever hand in hand.

Will Love Have Flown?

SWEET, when summer suns fade out
And autumn woods are left to moan
Their sere leaves whirled to dismal rout,
Will love have flown?

When covert path and whispering dell,
Where lightly we the hours have sped,
Their joyance yield to winter's spell,
Will hope be dead?

Or, in the warmth of love's desire,
Will all the stretch of dreary days
Renew with gentler, subtler fire
The summer's praise?

A History.

WHEN Spring began, a tender bud Love laid
Upon my heart, nor leaf nor stem decayed.

But Summer came, and with her torrid breath
Breathed on the flower—and Autumn saw its death.

Now Winter's here, and on my sad heart lie
The yellow leaves; their fragrance passed me by.

And so adieu forever, flowers of Love,
The yellow leaves I prize all else above.

Constancy.

DEAR love, we may not live in this sad wise,
With heart to heart unpressed thro' weary years,
With lips untouched of lips,—drear sacrifice,—
And lives all-hungering, thrilled with haunting fears.

Will, of the coming years—a dismal train—
A little space, however brief, restore
To us the by-gone gladness and the pain
Of love we deem as true forevermore?

The bitter years seem leagued with fate to win
From life her dower, from constancy her trust;
But that our love was born with faith a twin,
My heart ere now were withered into dust.

To a Miniature.

STILL dreaming o'er thy pictured face,
Held in its quaintly carven case
Of tarnished gold,
I search thine ever fixéd eyes
For all the love that in them lies—
But thou art banned in Paradise,
And I am old.

'Tis vain to press thine arching mouth;
Its fragrance lingers in the South
Where thou art laid.
But memory—O tender grace!
By whose sweet mystery I trace
Of love its earliest time and place!—
Will never fade.

A Bagatelle.

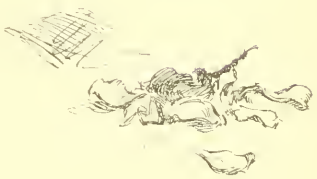
WHEN someone's lips were near my own last night,
I deemed I trifled, playing but a part;
But morning put the fond conceit to flight,
For smile and glance still lingered in my heart.

And when I strove to cast her image out,
Fate's little daysman, Love, in frolic, tost
A rose-leaf on the balance of my doubt
And laughed—because I wavered and was lost.

Who Cares?

WHO cares for the rose with leaves brown-turning,
Its fragrance yielded, its beauty fled?
No longer sought for in passion burning,
A sigh's enough for a rose that is dead.

Who cares for a life that is spent in trying,
Who cares for a life that is spent in vain,
When love is the goal and the heart is sighing
And living is lingering, bitter pain?



First Love.

A FIRST love never forgets.
Though youth to old age may decline,
And passion may tarnish the long years between,
The roses that damask the earliest green
With the leaves of decay will entwine;
And oh!
Sweetheart, too late, in the winter of life,
Thy light heart will droop and repine.

A first love never forgets.
Though other affections may bring
To the hungering heart a vague respite, a thrall
Of passing illusion, the note through it all
Will be the enchantment of spring;
And oh!
Sweetheart, too late, in the winter of life,
Will hope be a profitless thing.

Fay Fickle.

YOU came as the spring advances,
A blossom crowned with the light,
A wildering maze of glances—
Keen arrows of love in flight.

And warmed by your soft caresses,
Love, in the leaf of a rose,
Sought dalliance in balmy tresses,
And faith in the wind that blows.

You passed me as autumn passes,
With sighing and vague regret—
But the dead rose in the grasses
Sorrowed that ever we met.

A Winter Song.

FILL up the glass! All sorrow flies
And joy bides till the morrow!
Fill up the glass that sparkles so
And drink a draught from Lethe's flow!
One hour of surcease borrow
From all the ills that fret the day—
The heart that grieves is only clay,
The ruby cup will not betray!

The ruby cup will not betray,
Though other friends forsake us;
For sweethearts lie to please a whim.
Fill up the goblet to the brim—
Lest deeper grief o'ertake us!
The heart that grieves is only clay,
'Twas made to break within a day—
Shout out the merry roundelay!

Fill up the glass! A golden June
Saw lovers twain together.
'Neath sober skies
A young love flies
The bleak December weather.
The heart that grieves is only clay,
'Twas made to break within a day—
Shout out the merry roundelay.

Circe.

THE whirring flakes to envy wrought
Against her soft cheeks beat and blow,
Where, summer's subtle magic caught,
The roses blush amid the snow.

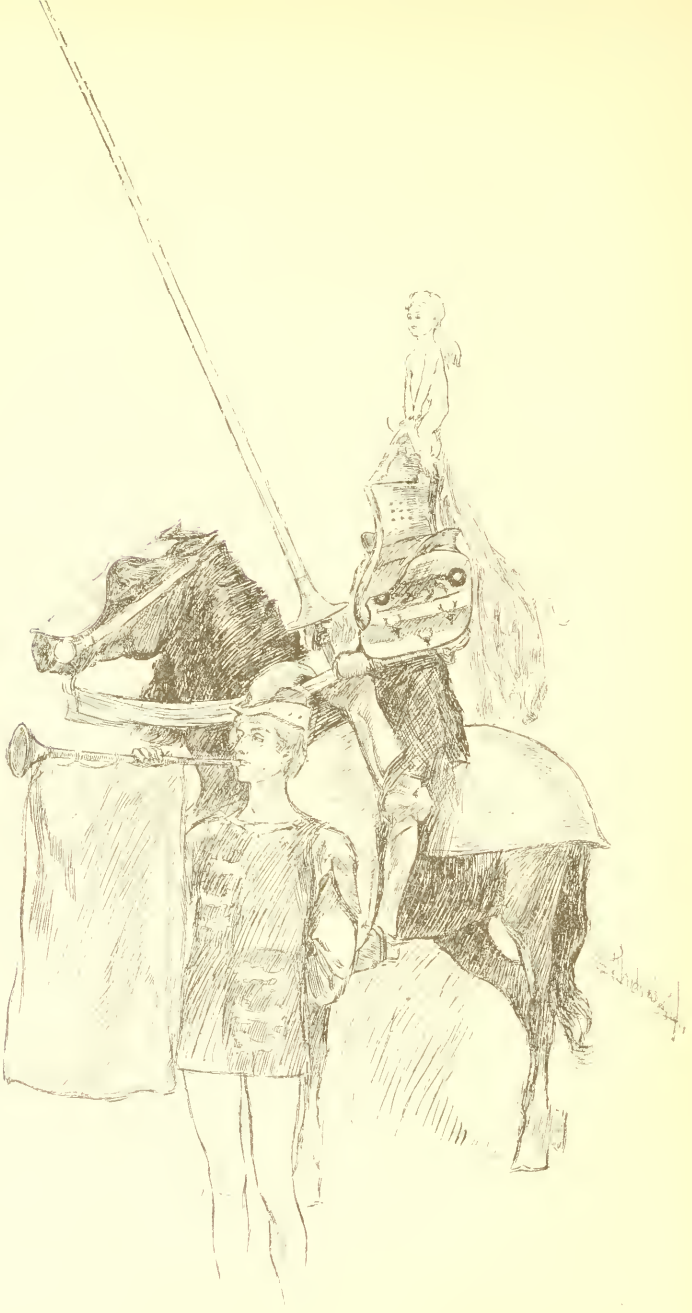
O dainty snare! Rebellious locks
About her blue eyes wildly dance,
And through the witching net she mocks
And screens her shy, coquettish glance.

The winds—the highway robbers bold!—
At every step sweet kisses thieve
From lips whose lures of scarlet hold
A spell that only she could weave.

Song.

THE day of life is dawning, love—
Oh, lift thine eyes, my sweet,
The first glad radiance of the morn
In happiness to greet!
And on my lips the vows thou gav'st
In fragrant kisses press,
And to my craving heart unfold
Thy heart's own loveliness.

Sweet as the breath of morn thou art,
And fleetingly the light
Plays in thy tender, loving eyes,
As day coquets with night.
Then on my lips the vows thou gav'st
In fragrant kisses press,
And to my craving heart unfold
Thy heart's own loveliness.



Oh, Never in Days of Yore.

OH, never in days of yore
Sought knight with a braver mien
A maiden's glance,
With conquering lance
And bannerol's flaunting sheen,
Than I sweet Lydia's smile
Have wooed with the rarest art;
But love's a spell
She knows right well,
And she bears a charméd heart.

Oh, Cupid himself, the rogue,
Would level in vain his dart;
For love's a spell
She knows right well,
And she bears a charméd heart.

Was ever in days of yore
Completer surrender made
By vanquished knight,
O'ercome in fight,
Or homage more loyal paid?
But faint are my blandishments
To win of her love a part;
For love's a spell
She knows right well,
And she bears a charméd heart.

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